

World Upside Down: The Book of Acts

Acts 9:23-43

1. Which biblical name is most ripe for a comeback? [POLL]

2. Saul, like the Israelite spies of old, chooses flight over fight (9.23-25).

At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

- 2 Corinthians 11:32-33

Then [Rahab] let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way."

- Joshua 2:15-16

And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets (*spyridas*; cf. Acts 9.25) full of the broken pieces left over.

- Matthew 15:37

3. Saul's personal conversion needed corporate validation (vv. 26-27).

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me.

- Galatians 1:18-24

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Acts 4:36-37

4. Saul is a dangerous “anti-authority” (vv. 28-30).

When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.

- Luke 8:34-36

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

- John 12:9-11

5. God gives the growth to His church (v. 31).

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

- 1 Corinthians 3:5-7

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth,

the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

- Colossians 1:3-6

6. A changed life starts with making the bed (vv. 32-35).

Jesus then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

- Matthew 9:6-8

His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

- Matthew 25:21

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

- Luke 16:10

7. The Lord remembers the little ones (vv. 36-43).

They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, “*Talitha cumi*,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

- Mark 5:38-42

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:
“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.
“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you
and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of
Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is
great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

- Luke 6:20-23

8. Saul pieces together Jesus as the Son of God (vv. 19b-22).

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

- Luke 24:44-48

8. Your most persuasive witness is often not sharing your *feats*, but your *faults*.